APM from 1.4.98 in phases and according to the phasing, sourcing of crude oil will be liberalised and imports will be allowed for joint and private sector refineries under actual user licence.

Wood Based industries in North-East

*152. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased state:

(a) the number of wood based industries operating in the North-east region which have plundered the local forests to an astonishing degree;

(b) whether these factories are fostered by a caucus of politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen from plains; and if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to shift those industries as per recommendations made by the Rajeshwar Committee and by when all these units are likely to be shifted?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (PROF. SAIFUDDIN SOZ):(a) to (c) As per Reports of the State Governments, there are 1228 saw mills, 291 saw-cum-veneer mills and 77 plywood factories in North-East region, State of Forest Report, 1995 published by Forest Survey of India has revealed that during the period 1991—1993, forest cover in the North-Eastern States decreased by 783 sq. km.
Supreme Court in a public interest litigation have taken cognisance of such a decrease in forest cover and given the following interim directions on 12-12-96:

(i) All on-going non-forestry activities within any forest in any State throughout the country must ceased forthwith except without the prior approval of Central Government under Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980.

(ii) Suspension, of felling of trees in all forests except in accordance with working plans of the State Governments approved by Central Government;

(iii) Complete ban on movement of cut trees and timber from any of the seven North-Eastern States to any other State of the country;

(iv) Complete ban on felling of any kind of trees in Tirap and Changlang Districts of Arunachal Pradesh and closure of all saw mills, veneer mills and plywood mills in Tirap and Changlang in Arunachal Pradesh and within a distance of 100 km. of its border in Assam.

(v) All State Governments to file a report regarding the number of saw mills, veneer and plywood mills actually operating within the State with particulars of their real ownership, the licensed and actual capacityies for stock and sawing, proximity to the nearest forests and source of limber.

The reports of the state Governments and recommendations of Rajeshwar Committee are under consideration of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

Filling up of Vacancies in Railways

*153. SHRI JALALUDIN ANSARI: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) sanctioned strength and the total number of vacancies in each department of railways grade-wise and railway-wise from the level of Assistant Officers grade to G.M. in all Zones/Units/RDSO/ Railway Board as on 31st March, 1997 including those filled on ad hoc basis; and

(b) the status of proposals to fill-up these vacancies and by when?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) and (b) A statement indicating the sanctioned strength of gazetted posts for all departments, grade-wise on the Indian Railways as on 1-1-97 is given in the

annexure *[See Appendix 182, Annexure No. 26]* filling up of vacancies/selection/ panel formation is . an on-going continuous process and there has been no avoidable delay in framing panels.

The information regarding Department-wise. Railway-wise and grade-wise sanctioned strength and vacancies as on 31st March, 1997 in all Zones/Units/RDSO is voluminous in nature and is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the Sabha.

Distributorship of Oil Companies

*154. SHRI JAGIR SINGH DARD: will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that U.P. Oil Selection Board (West) is arranging interviews/selection formalities of the eligible candidates for allotments 'of the "Distributorship" of various oil companies in due course of time;

(b) if so, the names of those places where such "Distributorship" are to be allotted;

(c) whether it is also a fact that some Members of Parliament have given some suggestions to the Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum on the subject; and

(d) if so, whether the Oil Selection Board will keep in mind all such suggestions during the course of interviews/selection; and upto which specific date, all selection formalities will be completed?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) In addition to the locations pending from earlier Marketing Plans, 83 Retail Outlet dealerships and 351 LPG distributorships have been included in the Marketing Plans 1996—98 for U.P.

(c) and (d) suggestion from Members of Parliament are received from time to time. These suggestions are taken into consideration while taking policy decisions. Efforts are made in each case for expeditious disposal.

Computerised railway booking offices in Gujarat

*155. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of railway stations and city booking offices in Gujarat having provision of return journey facilities through computer terminal with details thereof, station-wise and city booking office-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to increase their number in the State; and

(c) if so, the details thereof; and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) At all the 14 stations in Gujarat which have computerised reservation facilities i.e. Ahmedabad, Vadodara. Surat, Rajkot, Bhavnagar, Anand, New Bhuj, Jamnagar, Gandhidham, Bharuch, Nadiad, Veraval, Navsari, Valsad and 6 satellite locations i.e. Gandhinagar, Maninagar, Gandhigram, Sabarmati (Ahmedabad), Pratapnagar, Padmavati City Booking Office (Vadodara); bookings for onward and return journey reservations can be made for all trains originating from the stations linked to the reservation System at Mumbai which covers both the Zones of Central and Western Railways.

(b) and (c) Due to certain limitations in the telecommunication links, it has been possible to provide connectivity with the Chennai, Calcutta, Delhi and Secundcrabad Systems at only a very limited number of counters at Surat, Vadodara, Ahmedabad and Rajkot stations. To overcome this limitation a project has been undertaken for networking of all the 5 Systems, the software for which has been developed and the first phase successfully established between the Delhi and Secundcrabad Systems. It would be